West Asheville Oral History

Mrs. Curtis Baldwin

July 10, 1991

Interviewer: Rob Neufeld

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Interview with Mrs. Curtis Baldwin (Helen) by Rob Neufeld and Sally vander Straeten

SVS: Rob had told me you had shared your background and a little bit about your marriage with him, so when we were thinking about the time period that we're working on, 1927-30, around then, and into the thirties on, we realized that you were wife and mother then. We haven't spoken to anyone yet who's been able to talk to us about West Asheville from the perspective of a woman who was raising a family in West Asheville. Maybe you could tell us a little about what your impressions were about West Asheville when you moved there.

HB: Well, it was quite a contrast from where I grew up in Indiana. Of course, we had rolling hills around our home, but nothing compared to the mountains here. My husband came here with the Highway Commission. We had been living in the Raleigh area. We lived in a number of towns down there. The last one was Warrenton, which was a delightful place. When we came to Asheville, first my husband was assigned to Marshall, which was a great contrast from Warrenton. We moved in on Monday afternoon, and Wednesday morning we had to get up because there was one of the floods they have periodically down there. My husband had to get the highway Ford and bring it up the porch. Two men made a chair with their arms. By the time we got ready to leave at seven o'clock, the water was up to the porch. So they carried me out to the car. And my little boy was not quite two, and they took us up the side hill behind the Madison County Courthouse, and said, "Just get out, and I'll come back when I can." We were on the side hill, you know, and I'd only been in town since Monday afternoon. I had the suitcase with the boy in the back with some graham crackers. Then I saw a woman that looked like she might be affable and she let us sit on her porch.

We had to stay up there several days. We found an apartment there in a private home, and as soon as we found the apartment, he was transferred back to Asheville. So he had to come to Asheville, and he stayed over on Brevard Road, and then he'd come home out to Marshall because we didn't know whether he'd be sent back there or not because they were working on the road to Knoxville.

RN: He was transferred to Asheville working for...

HB: The State Highway Commission.

The program was dying down somewhat because the funds for the highway had diminished greatly. So he thought he'd better find something else. And he had a friend, believe it or not, that he had worked with in Montana. This man had been City Engineer, and my husband worked for him during college vacations out in Montana. But that chap had come here to help build Oteen. Some of those buildings were under construction at that time. I don't know how they found each other, but they did. So he was going to help with the construction of the American Enka plant.

So my husband decided to get his application in there because that would be a sure thing. The Highway Commission labor forces were a little bit dubious. I mean, their prospect. So he'd been out there from the very beginning when they started the pile driving.

RN: This company was what?

HB: Ferguson Company. It was a company out of--I think it was out of Baltimore. And my husband stayed with him--he was the last man on the payroll. The last thing he did was ship the superintendent's belongings back to the next place he was going to be located.

But on the pile driving, they had shifts. Then one night, he didn't come home, and I was worried. I thought something had happened. And I couldn't get a line call out there until daybreak. I got hold of this George C. Douglas, the man from Montana. And he said, "Nothing happened. When the shift was over," he said, "I hadn't seen him." But my husband said it was running so late, he'd miss his ride back to town. So he said he thought I wouldn't know the difference, and he'd call me about time for me to wake up. But you'd know the difference! I was really put out with that situation. It never happened again.

When we first went to West Asheville, we just had an apartment. Then we were able to rent a furnished house. And then we started buying the house on Majestic. We moved in there in July of '30. Our little boy was four then. He was four that Fall, in September. Our little girl was born in October. They were just four years apart. Well, then that Fall we started in the kindergarten down at Aycock School because that was going to be the last year the City could support the kindergarten program. We had a neighbor, we would take turns taking the children, walking them down to Aycock. Then, he [Helen's son] was home a year because then you had to be six to start to school. And when he went to school, then we went to Vance. Some of his playmates were going to Vance. He could walk to school with them part of the time.

RN: When you first moved in 1928 into West Asheville...?

HB: In '28, we moved over on Covington Street. We just had an apartment.

RN: You were in an apartment for two years.

HB: And then rented a house on Langwell, that's down off of Virginia Avenue.

RN: And then you moved into a house, you said on Majestic.

HB: In '30. In July.

RN: It seems like throughout your life you were very involved in civic affairs. How did the community first accept you or respond to you?

HB: Well, I think it was the PTA, mostly.

RN: The PTA immediately embraced you or put out feelers toward you?

HB: Well, of course, they always need all the support they can get in school. And, as I told you, my son started the first grade, and there were sixty-six children on roll. And so I'd go down there and take my little girl and stay there a while because the children were restless and they didn't all have a regular seat. You know, it depends on who was there that day. And no teacher's assistants like they have now.

SVS: One teacher and sixty-six children?

HB: On roll, but they weren't ever all there. So I started right in helping with what I could.

RN: Why weren't some of the children there?

HB: They'd be sick.

RN: I thought maybe they had to work on the farm or something like that.

HB: Oh, no, not in West Asheville. None of those children ...some of them might have helped in the garden in the summertime, but it never kept them out of school on that score.

And then we had grade mothers. Of course, the first thing you do--they need volunteers as grade mothers. And, of course, they helped in so many ways. They'd come to school and help put on special programs for the children. Then the PTA as a whole always had money-raising projects. The school needed so much, and the school city could not in most instances furnish it.

Later on our parent-teacher association raised money for a motion picture machine. And then we raised money for a curtain for the stage. We had a group of mother singers.

SVS: Mother singers?

HB: Mother signers, and that carried on until high school. We had it even in the high school. And they had father singers too. And they'd help with the program from time to time. I think it's in some of these West Asheville papers. Another thing the PTA did then, we operated the lunch room, which was a tremendous undertaking. It took so much help. We hired a dietician. The lunchroom committee was made up of the principal, the president of the PTA and then a lunchroom chairman. But we were down there

every day.

SVS: Making lunch for all those children.

HB: Well, we had the dietician, but there had to be help. And we had a small room, and the children didn't have enough chairs to sit on to eat. So one summer, the principal was out of town. He'd always said the school board wouldn't just give us the money, and we just couldn't do it. So we got the business manager to come out. We took him in the lunch room and we told him the children were standing to eat. We didn't have enough tables. Could he give us a couple extra tables and some more chairs? He gave us the tables and he gave us the chairs, and I said the room is crowded. Could we have the former kindergarten room next door. I said, "Could you cut a door through there?" He said, "We could take out the whole wall if the supports are in the right condition." A big portion of the wall came out and more tables were put in. Then I asked him about painting it. He said, "Well, all we've got is gray paint." They had used that other places in the building, but we didn't want the same in the lunch room. So I went down to Fortune's Hardware Store and got some blue pigment--good old PTA blue, and put (laughs) it in the gray paint, and the lunch room was beautiful when we got through. We got curtains and so on. And then we went down to Rockamoors (?) and bought a steam pail so the food would be hotter for the children. When the principal got back, here that lunch room was all made over (laughs), and you know the first thing he did was invite the school board out to his new lunch room.

And then when I went in as President, he hadn't been happy with the dietician we had had formerly. She kept a cat in there; and she was always serving the children these moon pies (laughs), and the children would get upset. Even the janitor was getting upset about the children (laughs).

SVS: Because they were so wired or something?

HB: That moon pie was just too rich for some of the children. So we got a new dietician lined up. She had been superintendent of the hospital up in Maynor (?) in the northeast at one time, and several of us knew her because she had been the dietician at Calvary Baptist Church. So, we had the two names, and of course all the Board was primed, and everybody voted for this...Mrs Garner. The only negative vote was from the principal. And then, afterwards, he said, "Let's make it unanimous," so we had a good dietician, and she was an excellent person and made the whole lunch room situation very much better than it had been.

PTAs really worked in those days. Then we had a welfare program, and we cooperated with the Needlework Guild because they would knit sweaters. It was a Biltmore Branch, but then we had a West Asheville section, too. So we'd give these children who needed it a sweater, and we'd get underwear for them and maybe a skirt to go with the sweater and jeans for the boys or something

like that.

SVS: Well, now, were there a lot of children who needed those things?

HB: There were quite a few at that time. Of course, Enka made a big difference as far as employment was concerned. But then, you see, we ran into the Depression, too. That made it difficult because people lost their jobs or their wages were cut and they got so little. I know one woman told me she worked in the plant and only got eight dollars a week.

SVS: Eight dollars a week?

HB: Yes. The PTA was--well, it was almost a full-time job because you'd go down there every day, and some of the mothers were very helpful. Then we'd bake things, you know, to have a bake sale, and we were always having money-raising projects. We just had to keep going.

RN: Mrs. Baldwin, you say there were sixty-six children in...

HB: In the first grade.

RN: ...in the first grade. And that was which school--Vance? So there were six grades. So, in your managing of the lunch room, you saw all six grades, didn't you?

HB: Oh, yes, all the children were in there. Because see, after my boy went on, my daughter was born in October. She couldn't start in school in September. So I sent her down to the Logans. They had a nursery school and they had first grade in their home down on Logan Avenue. So she had gone down there when she was three to their nursery school. Because, you see, Mrs. Logan's daughter, she had...John married Myrtle Logan--John Lawrence, but there was Irene and Grace. Then Katherine later became Dean of Women at Mars Hill College. They were all the Logan girls. And there were three Logan boys: Harry and Carl; and Bill is the one I showed you the picture of. He taught here and then he taught at that college in Florida.

RN: And what did their father do?

HB: I don't know. He was gone before I ever knew him. It might be in that article I gave you about Mrs. Logan. There's quite a little information. I haven't tried to re-read all these things because I'm having problems with my eyes. I've had implants in both eyes, but I'm still having difficulty.

RN: You must have seen about four hundred children in any one year going from first through sixth grade. Were they all in the lunch room at the same time or did they come in shifts?

HB: They had a couple of shifts.

RN: And did you get to know some of the kids pretty well?

HB: I did through their mothers because we worked with the mothers and we knew some of the children, and of course some of them lived in the neighborhood.

RN: You worked with the mothers. How did that...?

HB: They were members of the PTA, too. And some of the same people belonged to this community club, and it was very active. It made a great contribution.

SVS: What did the community club do. What were some of their projects?

HB: Well, there used to be a clubhouse, and we were always working to improve this clubhouse. It was down there off of Brevard Road. I don't know what ever happened to it. Probably, they had to remove it when they made the mistake of selling the land to the Aston Park Nursing Home. It's where we had a park, and we used to go out there for picnics and that sort of thing. It's a beautiful site.

RN: Now the clubhouse, I imagine, is different from the clubhouse I built as a boy. It wasn't just some sticks put together. This was like a community center?

HB: This had been a house at one time, and they worked it over for this club. At one time, the hostess and her husband lived there. The Junior Rhododendron Club met there, and you see we all belonged to the Federation of Women's Clubs. So we worked on some of their goals too for various programs. Some of the same women--like in that picture I can pick out the PTA people who also belonged to the club.

It's changed so now. When we moved there, part of Louisiana was not paved down the hill, and in the winter time the children used to coast. And my husband and I went with another couple, and we borrowed a sled and we coasted down. You got down to what was the bottom of the Louisiana hill, on the left side there was a creek and a pasture, it belonged to Dr. Orr. And the children used to like to go down there and take their lunch. I remember, one day my son went down. He was about five. I didn't want him to drink the water out of the creek for his lunch, so I gave him a pail. I didn't have a thermos bottle. I gave him a pail of water to take along for the two boys. Well, it started to rain, so they decided to come home, and I looked up from where I lived on Majestic--I could look down the corner of Louisiana. Here he was carrying that water back home so carefully (laughs) like it was the most precious thing in the world. I had to laugh at him

to think he'd do that.

It was a nice place and they could get away. There used to be a family by the name of Metcalf, and later they bought Dr. Orr's pasture. I imagine they did very well financially with it because all that was sold for commercial properties. And when you got to the bottom of Louisiana then, catty-cornered across the road was an apple orchard that belonged to a Case family, though you could go down there to buy apples. You went to Metcalf's to buy milk. They had a grocery up on Haywood Road not far from Westwood Place, and we traded there some. And there was an A&P right down at the foot of Majestic Avenue where we traded. Later, that was removed. Then there was a Winn Dixie on the corner of Louisiana. Now, that's just been removed and Ingles is building there.

RN: That's not where Orr's pasture was.

HB: No, Orr's pasture was just beyond the armory. Have you ever been down Louisiana and seen the armory? Well, the pasture was just beyond it on the same side as the armory. There was a creek there.

RN: How were the kids in those days?

HB: Well, my nearest neighbor had one son and he was a policeman, and he believed in discipline. My husband was older than I by thirteen years, and he believed in discipline. And we had very few problems. Because if my son was over there and he did something he shouldn't, Mr. Miles directed him just as he would his own boy. We had a good cooperative operation. Then at the back of us, was one of the Starnes--Bert, he's the son of this Mrs. George Starnes, whose article I gave you. They were a fine family, and they had four boys and they had no problems. We all had the same goals, you know, for disciplining. But the children all had good time playing.

RN: Was there a neighborhood policeman?

HB: No. But this Mr. Miles, part of the time he was a desk sergeant in the police department. He was crossing the street with another policeman one night and a man who lived on Louisiana drove too rapidly and hit both those policeman down on Haywood Road. The two policeman were crossing the street to turn off the traffic light. The other man eventually passed away, but Mr. Miles was injured terribly. Finally, the city sent him to Baltimore, and they couldn't do anything as far as surgery was concerned. He had what they call a diaphragmatic hernia. I had a doctor who had come to Asheville from Mayo's, and he said there was a surgeon up there who could cope with that kind of surgery. So the city sent Mr. Miles up there, and he did have the surgery. When he went to Baltimore, for instance, his wife wanted to go with him so I kept their son for ten days while they were up

there. I mean, we were friends and neighbors and people did more.

I know one time, my husband--my baby was nine months old. My husband asked me to call on this friend of his, this man he worked with. His wife was ill, and they had adopted this baby, and they just couldn't cope with it at this time. So he said, go down and see how they are. I asked this man if there's anything I could do, and he said, "Yes, take this baby." So I brought him home. He was seven months. I kept that baby for three weeks. And I said it cried all the time because they had picked it up every time you know, to prevent the mother from being upset about it. The first week, I thought, he's got to get over this, so I can't pick him up every time. His daddy was gone for that first week, but when he came back, he was the same (...). I thought he'd want to be with the baby, so I asked him to come over for supper. And he'd picked him up and of course I couldn't say anything, but I was glad when that three weeks were over. Because he had to have his shots, and I'd take both babies--my husband wouldn't go with me--and we'd go up to the doctor and get their diphtheria and whatever combination they had back then. But the baby seemed passive when we got up there. Now, my daughter was more vociferous about everything. I know the next week we went back for the second shot. The minute we got in that hall, she started screaming, and little Billy didn't pay a bit of attention (laughs) to the surroundings. But that was really something.

Then we didn't have any Girl Scouts. So I got involved in Girl Scouts because it came up in PTA, it'd be wonderful if we had one. And we got a couple of leaders, and we had Cub Scouts to start with. And then we got a Girl Scout troop, and I remember, they had to have so many go with them when they were going to stay overnight. I remember we walked clear out on Leicester Highway. The Girl Scout leader and assistant leader and I went, too. They did let us sleep in the bed in this house we had got, but the girls slept on the floor and didn't sleep. They talked all night.

SVS: Doesn't sound too different.

HB: And then I think the fact that I had dabbled in PTA so ardently because it seemed necessary, and there were so many things that needed to be done, word got around, and by '34, I found a letter in there from Red Cross, and here I was in charge of the campaign for West Asheville when we were to go door to door to get contributions. That's the way we did it then. Now it wouldn't work. People wouldn't come to the door.

RN: Red Cross nominated you.

HB: Well, somebody on their staff--Mrs. Moss, who was executive then, and somebody must have told her that I was a willy-nilly volunteer (laughs). I just get into more things at one time. I

had thirteen different things I was trying to do. But one thing led to another. It led to a permanent job eventually because when I was president of the PTA we sold--the Kiwanis Club used to be responsible for the Christmas sale here in Buncombe County. I helped with that because each PTA did. We had tables in the Post Office and in the banks and that sort of thing. So they decided to hire a permanent person to help carry on the programs so they could develop more of a program because we had quite a bit of tuberculosis at that time. So they came and asked me if I'd be interested, and I thought, well, I'm working for free for these things, I might as well.

SVS: That's right. Did women work a lot?

HB: Not then.

SVS: So you were one of the first working women?

HB: From out there in my neighborhood. So I went over there and they talked to be about how the program needed to be developed, and I was the only person to start with. I had been a volunteer for the Red Cross prior to going to work. I have a B.A. And I started in '42. There were some other women in West Asheville, we were gray ladies. We visited patients--because some of them were long-term patients. In fact, I had one man that was in there ten years. He'd been principal of the high school before he broke down with tuberculosis.

SVS: And they were all in the V.A. Hospital?

HB: In the V.A. Hospital. We had the largest hospital for tuberculosis. I think at one time we had 1,200 beds. See, they didn't have a drug then that would help. We had a sanitorium in Black Mountain. We had patients out there from all of Western North Carolina, but we did not have any beds for black people, and tuberculosis was quite prevalent among the black people. So on our Board, after we had been operating a while, quite a number of the men that were in the Kiwanis Club were interested, so they served as our initial board plus some women. Eventually, they asked three principals from black schools to serve on our board, and they were real happy to serve. They went to a conference in Greensboro, and they were the only board members in the group. The others were just on a committee. And then we started a movement to interest more people in sending petitions to the State legislature to build an addition to the sanitorium for black patients. These principals worked very ardently because they were interested.

And then we decided that we'd hire somebody to help with the blacks because we had so many people here that needed education. So we hired the first black person to work in the courthouse. It was Mr. Jessie Ray. And he was a wonderful help to us because when we had a colored patient that had to go to the sanitorium,

sometimes they had to wait nine months for a bed, and they had to send them down to McCane(?), which was near Pinehurst. But Mr. Ray would always furnish an ambulance for us to send the patient down there. Of course, if it was a white patient, sometimes they'd call me from Mission Hospital. If they found an active case for a person who came in there, at that time they didn't keep tuberculosis patients in a general hospital. If they were able to ride in a car, I'd go get them and take them out to Black Mountain to the sanitorium. Otherwise, we'd have to send an ambulance for them. But we had a high incidence of tuberculosis. But Mrs. Ray came in. Through the National Tuberculosis Association, we got a six-week scholarship for her at the University of Michigan, so she went up there for six weeks to learn some techniques about working with people that need to be instructed on the hazards of tuberculosis that they had in the family, how they should cope. Since I'd been at the V.A., I knew a lot of the men. I'd meet them on the streets sometimes. Along about 1948, we had the office open for three years then. Mrs. Ray came on in '46. I told the board how I had met these chaps and I'd ask them where they were working, and they'd say in a restaurant. See, they'd get tired of staying over there, and they'd go AWOL, and they didn't make them go back, and I think they got a $50 pension when they weren't in the hospital, or something like that.

We had two health departments and no X-ray. So they decided to buy an X-ray that would at least take small film. So we opened up a clinic. I hired a...

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And then we X-rayed the seniors in the high school and the lower grades. We supplied the tuberculin test for the children. In certain grades, they gave the tuberculin test. We had great publicity on that one time. Gertrude Ramsey was on the paper. We had a Sunday spread with pictures of these children getting their tuberculin tests, and all the screwed up faces you'd ever see (laughs). It was great to publicize it, that was great.

We had this tuberculosis nursing home in West Asheville on Shelburne Road. Mr Abbott (?)--they called it Zephyr Hill. In the summertime, the Kiwanis Club would raise money and they'd send children out there for six weeks that had a positive tuberculin test. They'd have two groups, so more children could take advantage of it, and they'd give them a good diet so they'd gain weight and be in better condition.

RN: When was the vaccine developed? Do you recall?

HB: The vaccine had been developed before I went into it. I.N.A.H. first starting using that which, within a short period of time, would make a patient negative as far as exposure to other people. It was a great improvement. But I remember when they first starting using it at the V.A., they didn't know the

dosage, and they gave them what then proved to be too much. They'd say they felt like their beds were rocking and all that sort of thing. You know, it's like any research that's being done. They have to work it out to get the proper dosage. That was interesting work because you felt that you were making a real contribution to the improvement of the community.

RN: Mrs. Baldwin, where do you get your drive?

HB: Well, I have to tell you, my mother was a Hatfield and her mother was a Harlan (laughs). And they both were fighting stock. Really, the Harlans came in with William Penn, and they were Quakers to start with. But they weren't Quakers by the time I came along. I'm just joking to say that because my mother always had a lot of drive. She just never stopped. And she never said she was tired. I never heard my mother say she was tired. I used to be able to bounce back when something happened to me, but I was in the hospital thirty-five days last year, and I just haven't bounced as high as I'd like (laughs).

RN: There's still room, isn't there? I would like to get back to your familiarity, your knowledge of the kids at the Vance Elementary. Which kids stand out? Were there good kids and bad kids?

HB: Very seldom did we have any problems with children. My daughter went there the second half of first grade, and there was one boy that gave some problems, but we found that he couldn't see. His vision was poor. So we worked it out so he got glasses. And then the room wasn't lighted very well and we got the club interested and they brought lighting for that room that was on the back of the school. The way the building was built, it was just unusually dark in that room. We found this boy with poor vision, and then the club furnished the lighting, brightened up the room. But, I don't remember that they had any particular problem with children.

RN: No behavior problems or anything like that.

HB: No, it just seemed the teachers had more control then, and children had more discipline at home. And there were families...I didn't know of any one-parent families around us at all. There were two parents, and I think that makes a great deal of difference, when the father could help with the discipline.

RN: Did poverty during the Depression affect some of these families in a hard way?

HB: Of course, more of them needed help at school, they needed free lunches. We'd give out to those that needed it. We had a--well, it was a social worker in a sense, I mean, she was a volunteer, and would decide which ones, and talk it over with the

committee, and we would give a free lunch ticket to those children who needed it. That list grew. Then I found a list the other day for myself how I spent money, and you didn't spend much because the wages were cut. I had a list of what I spent for Christmas--for the toys for the neighbor boys, and my son was giving gifts, too. I think it'd be a dollar or something like that with which you'd find something for them. And even for relatives, you just didn't spend hardly anything. You didn't have it.

RN: Did you and the teachers find that even though the children were taken care of well in the school, that their family life because of the poverty was affecting them in ways that hurt their ability to study or stay in school?

HB: Families had gardens, many of them did. That helped take care of the food, and that made a big difference. I remember this one woman. Her children went to Vance. This was one of the hopeless tribe. They lived in a place where they had apple trees, and those children didn't have much. I never met the father, but the mother wasn't very helpful. She'd come over and ask me for clothes from my daughter, you know. At first I gave them to her, and then I thought, she needs some self-respect. So I told her the next time, I said, "You can bring me some apples," because I knew there are apple trees where she lived because we used to cut through there to walk to Vance School. She never produced the apples. And I said, when I was in the courthouse where my office was later, I saw three generations of that family coming into the Welfare Department. You've got to teach children to have some respect and try to make an effort.

RN: Most families did have plots where they had orchards or farms?

HB: No, some of them lived on a street like we did. My husband had a garden in our back yard. And other people had family members that lived out from town, and they would give them vegetables sometimes. And they'd go out and pick berries or pick apples or whatever, you know. And I know the people on our street, they were all struggling to pay for a home. At that time, everybody...let's see, there might have been one house or two down toward Haywood Road that was rented, but the other people owned their homes. On the side street, on Crown, those people were buying their homes, most of them. But not everybody had a garden. Some weren't interested and some were older people. But some of them a grown son or somebody that could help.

Of course, we lost money. We had money in the West Asheville Bank. We lost that. We never got it back. And we had a little bit in a bank downtown. We lost that. So it was a real struggle. It was prevalent all over and my mother was up in Indiana. Nearly always when mother would send a letter, she'd

put a dollar or two in and say, "Helen, go to a movie," and she'd say, "take the children" (laughs). And everybody was in the same situation. But, of course, movies were cheap. We did try to let them go on Saturday afternoon. Some of the movies, even then, I didn't approve of. In the PTA magazine, they would have a list of movies that were suitable for children, so we got to the point that if they wanted to go to the movies, they'd just go get the PTA magazine and look it up. I guess that was ingrained in me to keep that up because I thought they needed more censorship, and of course now, it's appalling what they have for children to see on TV and movies, too.

RN: I don't even think Walt Disney would make it past you these days (laughter).

So, it also seems that extended families were more prevalent then also, so not only did some families have gardens to help with the food situation, but those that didn't had family members.

HB: Some had. Of course, I didn't, but I was blessed with mother. When she would come, she'd bring canned apple sauce and peaches and cherries and everything because she had a garden and she had trees in the yard, even peaches. When my brother would drive down and bring mother, she'd always bring cases, which were wonderful, because she said she always canned more than they could eat at home.

RN: I wonder how many households were in a situation like yours. In other words, how many newcomers were there who were travelling from distant parts and who didn't have extended families right there in West Asheville?

HB: Well, I was trying to think of the people that I knew. Now the Hanlons came here. They lived up in Siran (?) Park. She and I were good friends. She was from, I think it was Ohio, and they were down here. I can't remember what he did, but they moved back to some place near Columbus, Ohio. She worked with the PTA. That's the way I knew her. She was vice-president when I was president of the PTA. Her daughter was the same age as my daughter, and she had two sisters in Asheville. And then her daughter had two children, and one of them, was the girl who had been my choir director at Trinity Episcopal Church. So they have family around here. The Carricos (?), he was at American Enka. They had come from Virginia. But she had stayed on. She's out at Givens Estate now. There were some others who came. Of course, there were quite a few Dutch, and they went to Vance School. An interesting thing--one of those so-called girls had just moved in at seventy into an apartment downstairs in this building [Lake Shore Apartments, Asheville].

Then there was a prospective mother-in-law and father-in-law who lived sideways across the street from us. Their name was Caldwell. Her husband later taught at Georgia Tech, and he

passed away, and she'd been living in Atlanta, and she wanted to get back to Asheville. Her father and mother came from Holland and worked at Enka. Her name was Spinebrook (?) and her first name was Henny.

SVS: So did a lot of Dutch people come to work at Enka?

HB: Oh, yes. They brought a lot of girls over to teach the American girls how to operate the machinery and so on.

SVS: When was that?

HB: That was probably as soon as they got the plant ready to open. And they had a dormitory for the girls, and the girls went back to Haarlem, those girls did. That was another interesting thing. When they got ready to sell out the beds and so on, we bought two and used them for twin beds in our boy's room.

SVS: And all those girls went back to Haarlem?

HB: As far as I know. I couldn't say that they all went. There might have been some that wanted to stay, but I think most of them wanted to get back with their families. There were quite of few who came over. Now, we've got another Dutch family here in the building. Dr. Benninger came here from Holland in '54 as head of the chemical division. And they're an interesting couple. They're Jewish, and it's was fascinating to have live with them through the war because they have three--two sons and a daughter--in Israel. And the son had a FAX machine. So he sent it to an office here where they have a friend, but they couldn't hear over the weekend. So she went down to Sears and bought herself a FAX machine. And the letters he wrote on the machine were fascinating. He told how all twelve of them would get in one bedroom, and there was a couple that had just been over from Russia, had an apartment in the same building. They had them come up with them. It was real interesting to sit on the sidelines and to think it went back--I had known this woman's mother back when they lived out on Brevard Road. I asked her, "Wasn't it 147 Brevard Road." She said, "That's where we lived." I don't know why I remember that. I forget important things (laughs).

RN: It doesn't sound like you forget much. So Enka attracted people from all over.

HB: Yes, there were quite a few that came in here.

RN: Mainly, the people who were coming from outside were coming because of Enka.

HB: I don't know how those people were hired unless they knew the plant was being built. Sometimes, concerns will go to

colleges, but I don't think they followed that procedure. I guess it was word of mouth as much as anything. And some of the engineers probably read an ad in an engineering magazine.

RN: And those Enka employees settled in West Asheville and also Enka and Candler?

HB: Oh, yes, and in town proper, too, because, now, for instance in West Asheville, the man who was Treasurer of Champion Paper Fiber, I met his wife, and we've been friends all these years. They lived in West Asheville in Malvern Hills near where O.E. Starnes' parents lived, where O.E. lived and his brother, Hal.

RN: Who was this?

HB: Damtoft was his name.

RN: You were saying over the phone that Enka took care of its families.

HB: Well, when the mothers had new babies, they sent milk. I think it was a quart a day, so you had milk to drink and be sure you had milk for the baby. I guess that was the theory.

RN: They didn't build houses for any of its employees?

HB: No. Oh, they had a village out at Enka. Now, later, many, many years later they sold those.

RN: That village was built at the same time?

HB: Yes, quite a few of the employees worked out there. Then they had very nice residences around the lake and they had a clubhouse. And the higher-ups lived in the houses around the lake.

RN: Now, we already know you were involved in the PTA, the Red Cross; you weren't involved in the Girl Scouts yet.

HB: Yes, because my daughter was in Cub Scouts.

RN: Did you get involved with the Enka Lake Club at all?

HB: Well, we went out there. That's where we had my daughter's reception when she was married. But we didn't go very often.

RN: That was a social center, and what about the...

SVS: I want to get back to when they sent out things when the babies were born. Was there anything else besides a quart of milk?

HB: No, just the milk.

SVS: Did they do any other things to take care of the workers?

HB: They had a woman--Mabel Duncan--a wonderful person who did social work in a way. They had two libraries. They had a technical library and another woman, Alice Laubach, was the librarian there, but Mabel Duncan had, her library had books that any of the employees could enjoy. She would visit when people were out sick. She would go see what the problem was sometimes. She was wonderful. My husband always liked Charlie Russell--the painter, you know. He did his painting, his career was in Montana, but he came there from Missouri. They were eliminating some of the books from the library, and she gave my husband this book by Charlie Russell, and it was copies of the letters he had written, and he had his--oh, I've got it here, it's a real interesting book. He doodled little drawings all around the edges of the letters. It's fascinating. She knew how my husband liked Charlie Russell. Will Rogers was his other favorite. He liked both of them so much. He never got over his western twang, which you can see in the letters he wrote my daughters when she was in college. The girls were in hysterics because everything was so horsey-sounding.

RN: He coming from the West and you coming from the North....

HB: Well, Midwest. Everyone wondered how we got together. We were eighteen hundred miles apart. He graduated with honors at Montana State. The General Electric Company would send a scout out to the different colleges, and they would bring back in engineers, and that's the way he got to Fort Wayne. Then I went to this Shrine dance, and that's how we met.

RN: So did you feel there was anything to being a northerner coming south.

HB: When we first came to North Carolina, my husband had--I'd guess you'd call it a second cousin dowm near Greensboro. We visited there. We were going to Florida. I think I told you that. That was our plan. And they talked us out of it because they said that they had a great drop in real estate values and so on in Florida. This was in '25. They had this tremendous boom, and then it hadn't worked out. So to satisfy them as much as anything, he went into Greensboro to see what they had to offer at the Highway Commission, and they hired him right away.

Well, the first town we lived in was Oxford, and I swear I couldn't understand those people (laughs). One of the girls that I met invited me to a party, and the girls would laugh; and I'd laugh, but I didn't know why. It was real southern, southern South Carolina [?]. We lived there about ten months, and then we shifted down to a place called Fuquay Springs down below Raleigh. There I met people who were from...well, the man, Mr. Broughton,

who was with Edwards and Broughton, a printing company in Raleigh. And other people came out to Fuquay to drink the water. It was supposed to have medicinal value. And their accent didn't seem quite so pronounced. Then we lived in Dunn, then back to Fuquay Springs, and they shifted us to Warrenton. It was funny. When I lived in Oxford, I was an outsider. The men would bow and tip their hats on the street, you know, but I didn't have much luck with the women. But I went to church and we finally developed some friendships. It was so funny then.

After I had been in Fuquay Springs, I met some of the people from Raleigh who had come down there, and this one woman, when I got ready to go to Warrenton, she said, "Oh, I've got a cousin in Warrenton." So that was all I needed. The first week I was there, I went to five bridge parties (laughs). All you needed was to know someone. All my problem was getting a babysitter because Curtis was just about eighteen months old.

Then to go down to Marshall, that was quite a contrast.

SVS: Then you got to West Asheville and you really settled into West Asheville. Could you give us some sense of what you think is unique about West Asheville? What's special about West Asheville to you as opposed to all these other places?

HB: The people were friendly. The families were strong. And then, I'm an Episcopalian, but there was not an Episcopal Church, so we went to Calvary Baptist, and, you see, you meet a lot of people that way. I made friends that I still have, sixty years. I sang in the choir there. I used to sing for a lot of funerals because Mr. Groce (?), who was a very popular minister, he held more funerals than anybody.

[Interview is paused for neighbor (Mrs. Benninger) at door, then picked up again, with Mrs. Baldwin referring to mementos and clippings.]

HB: Let me all tell you about this, for example. I had down here doctor's expenses. Hospital care, $172.21. Hospital care for May was $2.03 (laughs). Clothing for the year, I had down $140 for the year--7-1/2%. I figured percentages on all of them.

RN: That's wonderful. What year was this?

HB: I think this was along about '35. That was when I was in the hospital for eight weeks. But here are the gifts I bought. Earrings, fifty cents. Key taners (?), twenty-five. Kerchiefs--these were some of the children's to give. My mother, hose, eighty-one cents. I had everything itemized that we'd spent.

This says, doctors, 1937. We were paying eleven doctors at one time because when I went to the hospital, we didn't have hospital insurance. And, to start with, Enka didn't have it either, as I remember. Later on, we had it.

RN: So was this partly to help you control your finances?

HB: Well, I needed to know how we spent the money. We kept track of it. My total expense for Christmas was sixty dollars.

RN: Sounds like you splurged on Christmas.

HB: Church was thirty-one.

RN: Those are the big items, aren't they?

HB: My husband belonged to a Masonic organization back in his home town. Now, I belonged to a Saturday music club. That was three dollars. The Community Club was a dollar. So we spent twenty-eight dollars. Well, I just found that and I thought it was interesting.

You might be interested in that [referring to group photo]. I was chairman for the women's group when we wanted to elect Dr. Frank Graham, who had been president of the university; and two of those women--I was from West Asheville and another one was from West Asheville, and the others were from town. But it just seemed it got to the point that if they wanted somebody for something, they called.

Well now, let's see what year this was. That's the West Asheville Club, it had representation at that program.

SVS: 1940.

HB: So I said, they had an organization. You said something I think about John Lawrence. About '50, they had some kind of a Men's Club because it's in there. My husband's in the picture. So is O.E. Starnes, Sr.

RN: [looking at expenses] Your home was coal heated at this time?

HB: Yes. Then we turned to--what is it you get from the gas company--coke. Then we switched to coke. Now, I'll tell you how hard times were. Our basement was dirt, and I decided I wanted to wash down there because I had a time having to wash it in the kitchen. I had to run down. We had a little laundry stove. Did you ever see a little laundry stove? Well, you ought to try washing in the kitchen, and then running down to keep that hot water tank going. You put wood in that. And it won't last any time, and it would go out, and then you had to start over. So I decided I was going to have a place concreted in the basement where I could wash down there and be closer to the water heater (laughs). Got it dug out. Little Bert Starnes and my boy would each take their wagons, and I'd put the dirt in their wagons and they'd haul it out the back yard and get rid of it. Well, we got it finished, and my husband had a man come pave it, and then you know what happened to it? He put his coke on it (laughs), for

the furnace. So I quit working in the basement.

RN: Were you aware of a coal soot problem in the city? Did the soot that was emitted from the chimneys because of the coal create a problem in the city?

HB: Not that I heard of then. You mean, pollution? It wasn't discussed at that point in time.

I've got a lot of clippings that I thought--you could see that the people in West Asheville got a lot of publicity. Through the Community Club, I became President of the Federation of Women's Clubs. This district had twenty-nine clubs in it.

This one, she was the wife of the Superintendent of Schools. She lived up at Sylva. She was the Co-chairman. I was Chairman for the State Convention. You want a convention back in those days, I put one on. I was chairman for one, we had thirteen states represented for the Tuberculosis Association. They were here a week. The first day, they came in on Sunday, extra early, but we had hostesses, we had hospitality rooms all over the place--Vanderbilt and the Battery Park. We had flowers. I had a chart for the flower bouquets to be changed from one room to the other. This man was with Lance Packing in Charlotte, and he brought the crackers, peanut butter crackers, and all that sort of thing. Then we had a Mr. Lamb who lived in West Asheville. He furnished us with Crown Colas. You know, all that, and you had to keep checking and so on. But the first day, the first request I had nearly threw me. They wanted helium for balloons. Well, we found them that. It was a shocker for the first day when I had a whole week ahead of me.

The executive secretary from Raleigh, no, she was secretary to the executive, came to me. She said, "I think it's so nice of you and Curt to have us out for supper tonight." Now, I didn't know anything about it (laughs). He'd invited about eight people, and his menu was pancakes and steak. He was going to fix the steak in the yard. I don't know how he was going to fix the pancakes (laughs). Oh, he loved pancakes, and nothing was too good.

RN: He sounds like he's a Westerner.

HB: He was. I have to tell you. I went on a honeymoon with a Westerner. I'd never camped. We decided to go to Yellowstone Park and stop off and visit his home. So, he got a tent, and he got a piece of sheet iron about that big square and little andirons. They stood about like that. So we'd stop at night. He'd build a fire and put the andirons in. I had to cook on that. I'd never cooked on anything like that in my life. But I had to manage somehow.

RN: He was happy in West Asheville?

HB: Oh, yes. Eventually, and he was a character. When Fall

came time for hunting, he'd start walking part-way home from Enka. He'd walk a certain distance. He'd always get a ride. People were always wanting to pick him up, take him, you know. "You need a ride?" He'd wave them off a lot of times. He'd walk because eventually he'd go hunting--deer hunting, bear hunting. He got a bear, he got a deer. Bear hunting, he belonged to this Tom Wilson's Club way up in...

END OF TAPE 1, SIDE 2; CONTINUED ON TAPE 2, SIDE 1

HB: June Lamp (?), she worked in the mission field, did social work in Japan.

SVS: Could you tell us a little bit about Mission Memorial Hospital, and some of their history at that point?

HB: You've never seen the history I helped write? Let me get you a copy.

I was secretary for seventeen years. I never took shorthand. I say that's why (laughs) I've got so much trouble now [with her arthritis]. But I was on the board twenty years, and then I served one year as secretary when I wasn't even a Board member. See, when we were elected, for some reason, I was the first one ever from West Asheville, as far as I know, and that was in '42. You were elected for life then because women ran the hospital. Women started the hospital in 1885.

RN: So how did you lose it?

HB: You see, before '48, some of the doctors and other people had started what they called the Asheville Hospital Association, and they were going to build another hospital. You see, St. Jo was a TB hospital. In fact, President Roosevelt came to see I guess it was his secretary, who was a patient there at one time. Then, later they converted to a general hospital. But when I went on the board, we were over on the corner of Charlotte Street. As I say, we were elected for life, and there were fifteen of us. Well then, when this other movement started, we had been given some land up on Chunn's Cove below Seely's Castle. We even went out there to look at it because we were going to build a larger hospital eventually. I mean, Mission was. And I remember that meeting so well because we had somebody here from Raleigh and Weldon Weir. And politicians were there, too. They said, well, the architecture would be sort of a problem, but they could work that out. Well, I said, "How are they going to get there?" And they said they'd put a light on the other side of the tunnel. We just had the tunnel then. Make a left hand turn. You just think what that would have been like today. Finally, when we met with this other group, we joined forces. The first board was half from that group and half from ours.

I went on the board in '42.

RN: This movement that started...

HB: Well, in '48 we joined forces with them.

RN: Who was propelling this movement?

HB: The men, the doctors, and the first president of the combined forces was Joel Adams, an attorney here in town. He was a wonderful person.

RN: Before Joel Adams, when it was separate, why did this group feel they needed a second hospital?

HB: We just felt we needed a newer hospital, new equipment, you know, that sort of thing, because you see we had a hard time during the war because, you see, it used to be that the nurses could work twelve hour shifts. Then we had a cadet nursing corps that was government, and we had to cut down to eight hour shifts for everybody, and that was a problem. And then when we had them there--I thought that was interesting. (Helen to Sally looking at clippings:) Let him see that Red Cross thing. I thought I'd give that to Red Cross because they'd be interested in seeing that. Look at the top.

RN: Look at that. The West Asheville News, a big pull-out.

HB: I thought that was interesting back then. This showed, if they found out you're willing to work...

RN: There's a nurse in the foreground, but in the background you see homes flooded, you see a homeless family--a mother and two children, and you see a man with a dog and two sacks over his shoulder leaving his shack-like home. The Red Cross was also involved then in homeless and poverty cases?

HB: I didn't have any connection with any program like that that they may have had.

It's too bad I don't have the time to write a story of my own.

RN: What would you write?

HB: (laughs) I'd tell a little bit about some of these people that I worked with in the organizations that I worked with. I stayed with PTA until I was on the State Board for five years. I was chairman of the audio-visual, encouraging people to censor programs for children and so on.

RN: So who are some of the people that you would mention?

HB: Well, I worked with people all over the State because I had a radio program here where we presented what we call health

education programs--parent education.

RN: WWNC?

HB: Yes. First time I was on WWNC, they were in the Flatiron Building. I went up there and sang with a quartet once.

RN: That's pretty early because they moved into the Citizen-Times Building, didn't they?

HB: Early, yes.

RN: You were there in the 30s.

HB: I can't remember, but I remember for some reason we were singing in a quartet. We sang when it was in that building. Then I had the radio program and we had it over the State. I didn't initiate the program, but I took it over from a former chairman. We had programs on eighteen stations, and I'd get someone to write scripts. Then we'd have mimeographed copies to send to each station, and they would present them. And we'd have study groups that would listen to the program and have a discussion.

SVS: Very nice! And what were some of the scripts? What were in them?

HB: Well, we had several. Professors at Greensboro, a woman's college, would write the scripts. Part of it was about health as far as the children were concerned, problems pertaining to health, encouragement to help the children at home, reading to them, and encouraging them to read, and just a variety of subjects. But I had to get someone in each town, and later on, I would put the program on here in the summertime when the others weren't available. That led to later on when I was working for the Tuberculosis Association. For seven months, we didn't have a health educator. I had the program continue the program they had with the doctors, and we'd ask them to write a script and send it to me with their writing. A lot of times, I'd have to go back and see it, and I would formulate the questions that would bring out the things that they wanted to discuss. I just found some old scripts the other day and threw them away.

SVS: They're not already in the trash can, are they?

HB: That was seven months of it.

RN: Did you save any of it at all?

HB: I may find some more someplace, but I've just been going through.

RN: I'm thankful that you think that the library is a good place to deposit these things.

HB: Well, I told you I gave them [Mission Memorial] everything from Mission. Now, here's the committee. This is the luncheon they had for us after we finished the history. [Shows photo and certificate.] You see, when they wanted the history written, they called Dr. Stevens, who had retired, and Nancy Cecil, who's George's wife, and she was born an Owen from Beacon manufacturing. We three got together and we needed to enlarge the committee. Well, Frank Parker, Judge Frank Parker had been on our old TB Advisory Committee at the old Mission, and Frank Coxe. Now, this was the second hospital building ever built in North Carolina for hospital purposes. There'd been one built I think in Raleigh, but just think of the steps there, when I can't cope with steps. I think, why did they ever do that? You can see Nancy Cecil. A couple people on there were staff. But they won an award with that in--I don't what, he sent me a notice about it, buried it afterwards.

But, you see, after we combined forces and started building the hospital, as secretary, I had to sign all the contracts, and sometimes we'd meet two and three times a week. So I had to work nights at my job to make up the time. And then I had to type up those minutes. I generally did that on Sunday afternoon. But I had to send a copy over to the hospital to the administrator every time. And with the new organization, we agreed that they would serve a term with three years and you could only serve two terms and then you had to be off the board a year. When George Cecil--I'd been chairman of the nominating committee and he was going to be the president. When I asked him to serve, he said he'd be president if I'd stay on as secretary, so they elected somebody else as secretary, so I worked a year when I wasn't on the board.

But that's what they gave us as our recognition.

SVS: It's beautiful.

RN: Since you had so much contact with people and remember things so well, perhaps we can go through a little review of some of the personalities of your time and place. For instance, who were some of the personalities associated with Enka? Did you know the bosses?

HB: Some of them I knew--my husband's immediate one. But they lived out in the village, so we didn't have any contact. We'd see them sometimes at the club. But, you see, when my husband first went at Enka, he worked shifts. It's just hard to lead a normal life when you're on shift. I always feel sorry for people that work in shifts. They have to, though. Now, some of the women whose husbands--some of us who worked at Enka but lived in West Asheville, of course I knew them. Like, I mentioned the Carricos, and there were others that lived in our neighborhood

that worked at Enka that were in different positions of responsibility. But we were involved a lot. My husband became a Scoutmaster and then a deacon in the Calvary Church. So we were pretty much involved with the children and anything pertaining to them. Then you didn't spend much money on movies or anything like that except for the children.

RN: Were there some children who showed some particular promise?

HB: This neighbor across the street, he went to Carolina, and he graduated Phi Beta Kappa, this policeman's son, and that was interesting because the father and mother--I don't think the mother ever had more than a seventh or eighth grade education. He [the father] grew up near Alexander and walked to farm school, Warren Wilson. He went to Warren Wilson. And they sent him up to New York someplace to do some farming, you know. That was during the first World War. That's all the education he had was farm school. And yet his son graduated Phi Beta Kappa from Chapel Hill. And he became plant manager later for the American Enka Company. I talked to Dr. Benninger about it because he knew him.

RN: What was his name?

HB: Miles. His name that we called him, his middle name was Darrell, it was Arnold Darrell, but at the plant it was A.D. Miles. But he left Enka and went with another concern later. At one point, Dr. Benninger said that he and Darrell went--for the company--went to Europe for some reason. They went at the same time. He was my son's playmate. My son didn't do quite that well, but he finished high school when he was sixteen. He wanted to go to Carolina. My husband and I thought it was too large for a youngster because they had so many Army and Navy groups down there. So we sent him to Berea, and he went to Berea for twelve months straight through. And he wanted to get in the Air Force or the Navy. He was near-sighted and he couldn't. And this professor at Berea told him that he could apply for this, well, it was an educational deferment. He didn't have the information correct and when Curtis applied for it, it was too late. You had to be so many months before you were eighteen. So he finished his twelve months and we knew then that he'd be drafted. So, he got to go to Chapel Hill, where he always wanted to go. He went to Chapel Hill for one quarter. And then on the 15th of December, he had to leave. Of course, we didn't know where he was going. So that's a wrench (?), first time to go, and not know at Christmastime where they are. But I thought going to Berea would help him. They were very particular. You couldn't smoke. They'd even check your room for cigarettes (laughs). And you had to go to church back then. I imagine it's quite different now. Did you see some of those pictures with hats and so on (laughs). Back then when we all wore hats everyplace we went.

SVS: I noticed you with a hat on in one of those clippings.

RN: Were there places where people could promenade, show off their clothing, or just look at other people's clothing?

HB: Well, I was never in fashion shows because I operated on a budget. But they'd have style shows, some of the clubs would, in town.

RN: People didn't walk up and down Haywood Road, did they?

HB: No.

RN: Was there much walking traffic in town?

HB: Well, of course the most walking we did was back and forth to school because, you see, from where I lived, that was I guess a mile.

RN: Did people travel by automobiles then mostly to do their shopping?

HB: We didn't have an automobile when we first moved on Majestic Place. We bought a second hand car, I think it was '37 before we had one. We'd had a Buick Roadster, and my husband sold it. And then it was the thirties before we had a car, so our walking was to Vance School and to church. And to get our milk, we went down on Economy Home Road across from the end of Louisiana. We'd go down--my husband would take the children with him and get milk from those people.

RN: So you did very local shopping, but not really shopping in downtown West Asheville.

HB: Well, now, for instance [inmdicating furnishings in room], I bought that secretary on Haywood Road at Home Furniture Company in West Asheville, and that chair that's right beside it. And I bought a second hand--and now it's a good table--it wasn't then. It's a solid oak table, and I use it for my table in the den.

RN: People didn't go to downtown West Asheville as they go the Mall now?

HB: We had a department store, Meadow's, down on Haywood Road, can't remember what that side street was, and of course we went to the drug store down on the corner of Brevard Road. It's where Luke Atkinson's furniture store is now. Of course, Fortune's was across the street from there. We'd go down there. Oh, I got some things at Meadow's, but we'd go downtown to Bon Marche, the downtown store. Belk's had a store, but it wasn't anything like it is now. There was a store called Evert's (?) on Patton

Avenue, and that's where Belk's was. Bon Marche was a good family department store. And then later we had Ivey's. Sometimes this friend and I, we'd go with our husbands too and take the children, on Sunday afternoon we'd go downtown, but Ivey's was so strict, they'd have draperies over their windows. You couldn't see on Sundays.

RN: Just a couple more questions. Could you tell us about some of the movers and shakers in West Asheville at that time, the people who were making the big decisions?

HB: Well, this Mr. Abernathy was on the City Council, which was important. And, of course, Gallatin Roberts who killed himself was from West Asheville. He was the mayor. His son still lives in West Asheville. He's a fine person. Edward G. Roberts. He lives out in Malvern Hills now. He had some problems with his lungs and he went out, that was before his marriage, he went out to Arizona at one point, Ed did. And he met this woman out there who had gone because she had asthma or something, but they later married and they lived in Asheville.

RN: Did you know Mr. Abernathy?

HB: Oh, yes, Mr. Abernathy, that's where we had...In the summertime they had the preventorium where we sent the children.

RN: Dr. Abernathy. He was a doctor?

HB: No. He had, I remember, I hadn't been with the TB Association very long when this man called me from Boston, said he had tuberculosis and he wanted to get out of the weather up there, and could I find him a place for himself and where his wife could stay too. So I called Mr. Abernathy. He'd been on my board, and he was a fine person. I'd always been interested, but never knew much about this Sulphur Springs Hotel that they used to have years ago. I guess you've got that. Isn't that part of West Asheville history?

RN: We have some information on it, but that hotel is no longer standing.

HB: Oh, no, It had gone years and years ago.

RN: It was started by the Carrier family.

HB: I noticed in one thing that you wanted for '30. Carrier Field opened.

RN: In 1930?

HB: '30.

RN: A Depression era building project?

HB: I just wanted you to see why I followed in history. I still belong to my Fort Wayne Club. And that whole group had made a whole leaflet really from letters they had written through the years. And it's just fascinating. And people don't write letters like that anymore. I was going to take them to this friend of mine that's...Oh, these are just all the different things I belonged to, had requests for, like serving on the city recreation committee. (laughs) State of North Carolina. That was '42. That was from the Governor. I ought to frame it. 72d Annual Congress of Correction. We had a tea out at Biltmore Forest and all that. Of course I didn't belong to any of that.

Now there's a West Asheville fellow. He's gone now, but he did well. And we had all sorts of beautification projects in West Asheville. Here the West Asheville group gave a tea out at Biltmore Hospital. West Asheville Guild to have tea and gather. Presbyterian Church Party. You see, we got a lot of publicity in town, too, back then. We even had a club that met at night, men and women, and have a good program.

RN: So were you the leading woman of West Asheville?

HB: I wouldn't say so. I think I was just one of those kind that answered any call anybody issued.

RN: Who would you say was the leading woman or other leading women?

HB: Well, this Mrs. Dalton was president of her garden club and she was president of the Community Club.

RN: Mrs. Dalton. What was her first name?

HB: Oh, I can't think.

RN: Well, we're probably coming to the end, not because we're running out of things to say, but because I think talking for an hour and a half is a lot for anybody. But it would be nice, for one thing, to come back and get some of your personal history because I think people would want to know more about you. You're a remarkable role model for people.

HB: Listen, I had so many pictures taken with different groups.

[Seeing clipping] I knew this boy because his grandmother lived across the street from me. He said, "When we have [?] organize this [...?] step aside. My children laughed. Back then they took more pictures of different groups, and they had society pages and all about the club meetings. Back during the war, of course, everybody had a lot to do. Everybody was overworked. That was interesting because I was captain of the day for the Red Cross. I had to be sure of the women. Everyone was supposed to

get their own substitute if you couldn't go. And we had to have coupons for gasoline that they would give us to get to the hospital. And they opened up that more general hospital. We'd go out there.

But I remember we had a psychiatric ward up there. Some of the girls--younger women--were afraid to go in there. They wanted me to go with them. You had to go and a sergeant would unlock the door, you know. And I remember, I went with one of them one day. We were standing there waiting until the sergeant would unlock the gate. And there was a boy sitting on the floor, leaning back against the bars. My young friend was standing to my left, and this boy reached up and just pulled on her skirt. And she was ready to go through the ceiling. And she looked down at him, and he looked up at her, and he said, "How much do you weigh?" She answered, and she said, "Is that too much?" She kind of collected herself. Then he said, "No, that's just right." That's just right. (laughs) But I said, you're tense when you're in there so it was a relief to--I can imagine how she felt when she (laughs).

We'd go out at ten in the morning. We had to be on duty at ten at the Red Cross desk, and we stayed til four in the afternoon. And if--sometimes some of the girls were to be buying presents for some of those back in the psychiatric ward. They'd want you to mail them to their parents or girl or whatever. And then if the girls had to go... [returns to clippings to donate most of files]

RN: Anyway, I think Indiana's loss was North Carolina's gain.

HB: Well, everybody worked hard then.

RN: People want to know--and this is something we can talk about another time--people who want to be happy with themselves and be great accomplishers, but for some reason can't find the motivation or the opportunity. They want to know, how do the ones who do do it. So I think people like you become a role model, and that's not to flatter you, that's just to state a case.

HB: No, I don't take credit for it. I just had a lot of energy. But the thing is now I feel it's awfully hard for me to keep my spirits up because I'm used to doing things, and I feel like I'm useless now because I'm not able to do much and I have to accept that, but it's an uphill job.

SVS: But the talking is really very helpful because as Rob said, just being able to tell other people about it is really inspiring.

HB: You know, when I was in high school, we had a club, and it said "to be intensely something." And I said I think that my trouble was that I was trying to be intensely everything. And

often since then--when I went to college, my IQ was 167, and I feel like I wasted my efforts and scattered. If I stayed with one thing, I would have been like this friend of mine that went with the Red Cross and stayed with the Red Cross. She got to be national volunteer chairman for the Red Cross. She's been going all over the world. Lunsford's her name, Charlotte Lunsford.

RN: But that is a common problem with people who are very intelligent because they do not want to narrow their field down.

HB: Well, I can't take any credit for it. I told the teacher at the time when she told me what my IQ was, I said, "That's 'cause I'm a fast reader." And I was. I could remember in the second grade. The teacher would ask us to read and then if we could give a sense of the paragraph to put up our hand. I guess she got tired of my putting my hand up because I can remember, she said, "You must read like Teddy Roosevelt, a page at a time." (laughs) So I can't take any credit. You're either blessed with something, some drive.

RN: I wonder, where would you be if you were born in a later era when women did have more opportunities.

HB: Well, no telling what I'd have been then.

SVS: Well, I wouldn't necessarily say women didn't have opportunities then.

RN: For civic action.

HB: Of course, all my friends were housekeepers. If you make a contribution like in PTA, what it can lead to is you get some experience and people know that you can do something. Then they call on you.

RN: Well, needless to say, it certainly sounds like you made a lot of contributions if not on a national level.
Thank you very much.